

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A casting apparatus comprising:  
  
a die which has an opening section above the die so as to pour a molten metal therefrom;  
  
a heater which is disposed above the die;  
  
a gas supplying section which supplies an inert gas to a surface of the molten metal;  
  
~~and~~  
  
a lid which is disposed between the surface of the molten liquid and an entirety of the heater during operation of the heater[[,]]; and  
  
a lid moving structure which moves the lid relatively to the die and controls an opening amount of the opening section above the die.
2. (Original) A casting apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the lid moving structure adjusts the opening amount according to a flow amount of the inert gas.
3. (Original) A casting apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the lid moving structure has a structure for moving the lid relatively to the die vertically, horizontally, or rotatively.
4. (Original) A casting apparatus according to claim 1 wherein:  
  
the molten metal is a molten silicon; and  
  
at least a bottom surface of the lid is coated by an non-reactive material with a silicon oxide gas or a silicide.
5. (Cancel)